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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001426

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT TIKRIT: SALAH AD DIN DESPERATE FOR
RECONCILIATION

Classified By: Classified by PRT Lead Steven Buckler for reasons 1.5 (b)
) and (d)

11. (U) This is a PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din cable.

12. (C) SUMMARY. Salah ad Din (SaD) is desperate for reconciliation, especially debaathification reform and reintegration of the former Iraqi Army (IA). In the new PRT Team Leader's round of introductory calls on the Governor, Deputy Governor, Provincial Council Chair, and the SaD Sheikhs' Council, all lamented the central GOI's lack of action on reconciliation and called for the fulfillment of the al Maliki administration's promises. Representative of the conversations, the Provincial Council Chair said, "Violence will not stop in the province until reconciliation happens," and several tribal sheikhs noted, "former Iraqi Army officers resort to insurgent activities as a means to feed their families." While discontentment and political frustration remain high in the province and are often expressed through insurgent attacks, a majority of SaD residents are now ready to participate in the political process and to voice their opinions through elections. However, this window of opportunity for bringing the SaD Sunnis into the political fold is open now. Continued inaction on reconciliation initiatives such as debaathification reform and reintegration of the former IA has the potential to reverse this trend among SaD Sunnis, potentially isolating them anew and re-fueling the insurgency. END SUMMARY.

Governor and Deputy Governor Weigh In

13. (C) In introductory meetings with the new PRT Team Leader and in other conversations, both SaD Governor Hamad Hamoud al Shakti and Deputy Governor Abdullah Ajbarah listed debaathification and reintegration of the former IA officers as the province's most pressing issues. The Governor said that thus far all reconciliation has been is "promises in the media, without one millimeter of action."

14. (C) In subsequent side-bar conversations after his mid-April trip to Baghdad to meet with GOI officials on issues of import to the province, the Governor said he felt like the province was making genuine efforts to reach out to and be responsive to the central GOI, but that the GOI was not responding in kind. Noting specific instances where GOI officials had promised to take action for the province and did not, he said authorization to hire employees for the province's new flour mill had not been done and baby formula and other Public Distribution System (PDS) food items remain in Um Qasir without secure transport to the province.

Provincial Council Chair Calls for Reconciliation

15. (C) In an April 23 security-focused conversation with

Province Council Chair Sheikh Rasheed Ossman, Sheikh Rasheed said, "Violence will not stop in the province until reconciliation happens." He described the province's struggle to incorporate disaffected former Baathists and IA officers as an achievable victory, but he underscored the limitations mandated by the current legislation governing the individuals.

Sheikhs Personalize the Reconciliation Problem

¶6. (C) At an April 24 meeting of the SaD Sheikhs' Council, the more than 50 sheikhs assembled called for action on debaathification reform and reintegration of the former IA. They denounced the al Maliki administration for making promises and not following through. Many sheikhs relayed personal stories of friends and family members who had joined the insurgency, or at least turned a blind eye to it, because of the economic hardship they have suffered as a result of debaathification and dismantling of the former IA. They also called for elections to take place as soon as possible and for direct election of individual candidates, rather than through a list-based system. (septel)

¶7. (C) Referring to their military service under the former regime and during the Iraq-Iran war, several sheikhs said they and their family members "had earned their pensions" in the service of their country and that they were entitled to their GOI-funded benefits. At the same time, however, Sheikh Ali Nada, head of Saddam's tribe, typified the general sentiments of the Council by saying, "Saddam is dead, and we must turn a new page in Iraq. There must be reconciliation."

Comment

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¶8. (C) The residents of Salah ad Din are not against democracy or the political process. They, however, are politically frustrated and discontent with the al Maliki administration's inaction on reconciliation. This political dissatisfaction has made a majority of SaD residents ready to participate in the political process and to voice their opinions through elections. However, this window of opportunity for bringing the SaD Sunnis into the political fold is open now. Continued inaction on reconciliation initiatives such as debaathification reform and reintegration of the former IA has the potential to reverse this trend among SaD Sunnis, potentially isolating them anew and re-fueling the insurgency. END COMMENT.

¶9. (U) For additional reporting from PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din, please see our SIPRNET Reporting Blog:
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Tikrit>.
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